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FLORIDA HEALTH CO-HOSTS NATIONAL HIV TESTING DAY EVENT ON JUNE 29

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Pensacola, Fla. – In observance of National HIV Testing Day (NHTD), the Florida Department of Health in Escambia County is co-hosting a free HIV testing event on Saturday, June 29 from 11-3 p.m. CDT at Brownsville Community Center, 3200 W DeSoto Street. This year's local theme is "Be fearless, get a test, know your status, and protect your life."

Each year, NHTD is observed on June 27. Since 1995, NHTD has been a day to highlight the importance of routine HIV testing and early diagnosis and treatment.

The CDC estimates that 1.2 million people in the US are living with HIV, and one in seven are unaware of their HIV infection. Those unaware of their status pose an elevated risk as they are not getting the care and treatment that could preserve their health and prevent spreading the virus to others.

"Routine testing and early diagnosis and treatment are key," said Area 1 HIV/AIDS Program Coordinator, Debbie Carty. "Studies have shown that receiving antiretroviral therapy as early as possible after diagnosis improves a patient's health, reduces transmission, and can eventually lead to viral suppression and better health outcomes."

CDC recommends anyone between ages 13 and 64 should be tested for HIV at least once during their lifetime. Persons at increased risk for HIV should be tested annually.

To locate HIV counseling, testing, and referral sites, visit www.KnowYourHIVStatus.com or text 'FLHIV' to 898211. Learn more about HIV prevention strategies and Florida's plan to eliminate HIV transmission and reduce HIV-related deaths. For more event information, call 850-595-6500, ext. 1500 or 1503.

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About the Florida Department of Health

The department, nationally accredited by the Public Health Accreditation Board, works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

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